



NUMERACY

Families working it out together

The opportunities are everywhere

There is ample evidence that positive involvement of families in children's learning can be a major contribution. Where to start is often a challenge, however, especially in the numeracy area.

As part of the Australian Government's *Numeracy Research and Development Initiative* a team led by Beth Powell in Western Australia has developed a poster and three brochures aimed at promoting the importance of numeracy to parents. The brochures also provide some welcome starting points to help families be part of their child's numeracy development. There are brochures for different age groups: the early years, the middle and later years of primary school. They can be used in a variety of ways by teachers and schools, for example in family mathematics programs.

Each brochure has a common format and provides practical information and suggestions under the following headings:

- What do we mean by numeracy?
- How can families help?
- How can families and schools work together?
- Calculator use
- Where to go for more information.

The team also produced a fridge list of examples for each age group. These are designed to be simple reminders that can be stuck on one of the most used appliances in the home!

The samples give some idea of what the materials are like — they are also able to be printed in full colour. Sample copies have been distributed to every primary school in Australia. Additional copies of both the poster and brochures can be ordered by contacting the Clearinghouse for National Literacy and Numeracy Research on (07) 3875 5703 or email clearinghouse@griffith.edu.au.

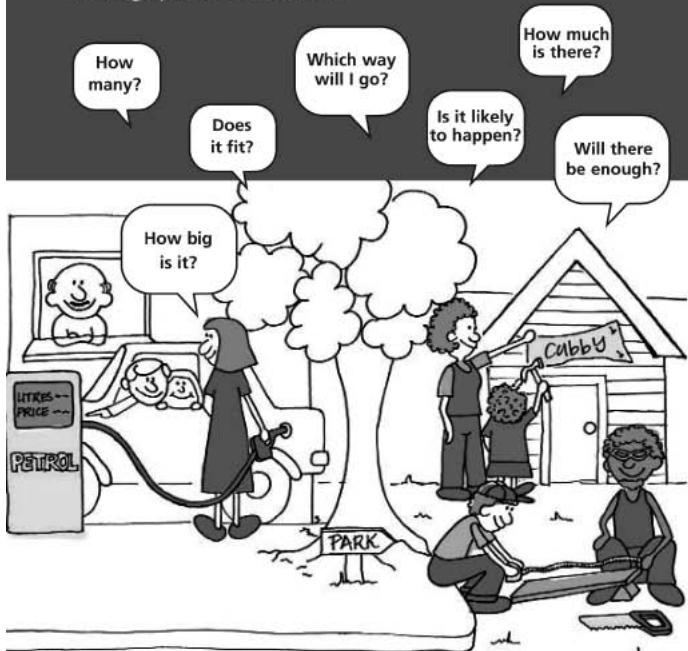
You can also download copies directly from the web at:
www.dest.gov.au/schools/publications and
www.gu.edu.au/school/cls/clearinghouse.

WILL MORONY from AAMT reports on a national project aimed to promote numeracy in families. The project was coordinated by a team from the Western Australian Department of Education and Murdoch University.

What do we mean by **numeracy**?

Children develop numeracy skills when they use mathematical ideas in their everyday situations.

They begin to make sense of these situations by asking questions such as:



Can **families** help?

YES !

You may feel that the maths children do at school is different from how you were taught, or that maths was not your best subject. You are however still able to help your child in many ways.

The information that follows will assist you in helping children learn and enjoy using their mathematical ideas in daily activities.

How can **families and schools** work together?

Talk with your child's teacher about numeracy at home and at school and raise any concerns with them.

Ask the teacher how you can support the class mathematics program at home.

Help your child to enjoy the mathematics they do at school by talking positively about work they bring home.



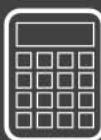
Support the teacher/school by attending parent meetings and volunteering your time or support.

Find out how mathematics teaching has changed since you were at school.

Find out how your child uses a calculator at school.

Help your child to plan how much money they will need for their lunch or outings at school. For example, have them write the amounts on envelopes and orders. Ask them to check they have the exact amount or how much change to expect.





Using calculators can help your child's numeracy

Using the calculator to count with decimal fractions

To count by 0.5 press

0 . 5 + = =

To count by 0.05s press

0 . 0 5 + = =

Please note that some older calculators may operate differently from this.

Try this with your child and ask them to stop and predict which number comes next. Check to find out.

Encourage your child to count as far as they can go.

Ask your child to say the numbers as they show on the screen. Some children enjoy writing the numbers on a long strip of paper and then looking for patterns.

Using the calculator to play games

Back to Zero: Have your child put in a number like 349.65 and ask them what they need to do to change the number to 349.05 in just one move. (They need to know that the 6 in 349.65 stands for 6 tenths or 0.6 and then subtract 0.6 to get to 349.05). You could take turns and continue the game until the screen shows 0.

Using the calculator to work out *how much?*

When shopping encourage your child to use a calculator to add up the cost of 3 or 4 items. Ask: *Does the result on the calculator look right? What does it say in dollars and cents?* Talk about totals which add up to amounts like \$15.24. Ask: *How much will you pay?*



Fridge List

Encourage your child to ask questions like these to help them make sense of their everyday situations...

